TITLE: Justifying Transcultural International Studies

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# Justifying Transcultural International Studies

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## Abstract

*This essay endeavours to justify a transcultural approach to international studies by showing that contemporary Western approaches to the theory of knowledge (epistemology) demand it. Both (sophisticated) falsificationism and pragmatic realism (or pragmatism) require that scientific truth-claims be redeemed discursively in the community of scientific experts. Owing to special features of social science, the claims to be redeemed include claims pertaining to meaning and intention. Because in international studies these claims rely on culturally sensitive interpretations, the discipline itself must assume a multicultural character in its institutions and practises, particularly in its practises of inquiry.*

## Key Words

Transcultural studies, epistemology, falsificationism, pragmatism, inquiry.

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## Introduction

In this essay I propose an epistemological justification for construing international studies as a transcultural enterprise. Most international studies scholars would welcome a transcultural conception of our discipline. After all, nations and cultures regularly intersect with and permeate one another. It's logical that a discipline concerned with global affairs would construe its mission as both international and transcultural. However, an epistemological justification suggests more than the dissemination and discussion of transcultural topics. It suggests- even requires- that the discipline itself become transcultural in its institutions and practises, particularly its practises of inquiry. To do otherwise would be to foster a discipline that engages in the production not of knowledge, but of rationalisation and regime apology.

If grounded in the Western epistemological tradition, my justification will have its greatest force. I will show that the Western tradition itself compels us to create a discipline not bound to that tradition. Accordingly, I

proceed by reviewing the central debate in modern Western epistemology. The most widely held contemporary positions in this debate present theory choice as a collective practise, conducted discursively by a community of inquirers. This outcome poses special problems for social sciences and particularly for those, like international studies, that traverse cultural bounds. I conclude by suggesting ways we might begin to address these problems.

## Theories of Theory Choice

A justification accompanies any theoretical innovation. The proponent of any new theory must persuade others of its intrinsic merits and superiority over pre-existing competitors. Explicitly or implicitly, such a justification necessarily appeals to some meta-theory- a theory of theory choice- on the basis of which we adjudicate claims to the rightness of competing generalisations. So, on what theory of theory choice shall we rely?

## The Normative Basis of Theory Choice

Before we can address this question, another question immediately arises. Do we require a theory of theory choice at a higher level of generality? That is, do we need a theory of choice to adjudicate competing theories of theory choice? If we do, we'll require a

higher-level theory to adjudicate those theories and so on, forever. Fortunately, we can sidestep this infinite regress. In selecting a theory of theory choice, we are selecting a normative principle for guiding our conduct in the business of selecting empirical theories. Thus, we ask how we *should* adjudicate competing theories about what *is*. We should select this normative guidance in a principled way. That is, we should select guidance broadly consistent with the principles that guide us in other areas of life, our theory of the good. In so doing, we avoid the infinite regress.

Both (sophisticated) falsifica-tionism and pragmatic realism (or pragmatism) require that scientific truth-claims be redeemed discursively in the community of scientific experts.

Broad consensus surrounds the more desirable characteristics of theories. Most, regardless of any meta-theoretical allegiance, value such properties as clarity, consistency, parsimony and fruitfulness for both practise and theory. Yet, because we often encounter trade-offs between these values, none can stand as the sole criterion of theory choice. We require more powerful guidance, a principle of a higher order, a maxim that can help us select among competing theories even in the presence of first-order trade-offs.

A theory's predictive capacity is by itself an inadequate indicator of its merit. We are not solely interested in accounting for observed variations in dependent variables. We also seek understanding of the underlying causal processes that produce these observations. Prediction certainly counts as valuable activity. However, the exclusive interest in prediction often betrays an interest in control. One learns to predict the values of dependent variables from the values of the independent in order to control or engineer outcomes. That is, one changes the values of such-and-such independent variables by so many units in order to change the value of some dependent variable by so many other units. When pursued in the natural sciences, this interest in control is benign. But, when pursued in the human sciences, the interest in control becomes an interest in *social* control. We should question whose ends this control would serve.

Contemporary thinkers urge us instead to further "human emancipation" (Habermas) or "human flourishing" (Putnam).[1] I take these as closely related notions. One cannot be truly emancipated if one is not flourishing and one cannot flourish if not free. Together, they seem far more defensible normatively than whatever theory of the good might be invoked to justify anyone's interest in social control. They also have a heritage that spans the entire history of inquiry. Francis Bacon, who inaugurated modern empirical science,

acted from the impulse to further human emancipation and flourishing. Bacon sought, through his inquiries, to predict the outcomes of natural processes and, from these predictions, to engineer solutions that further human flourishing by emancipating people from such natural ravages as famine, flood and pestilence. One wonders what interest is served when methods for controlling nature are applied uncritically to humans and human societies.

It's logical that a discipline concerned with global affairs would construe its mission as both international and transcultural.

In any event, I digress from my discussion of theories of theory choice. But I do so with purpose. I declare my affinity to the principle of human flourishing (or emancipation) as an underlying normative guide for choosing a theory of theory choice. This normative principle is consistent with the central Western norm of reciprocity, articulated in Christ's golden rule and Kant's categorical imperative. Because I wish to show that Western meta-theory requires a transcultural conception of international studies, it is useful, even necessary, that I adopt a normative principle for theory choice consistent with the Western tradition. Now I am ready to begin.

**Figure 1: Lakatos' epistemological typology**
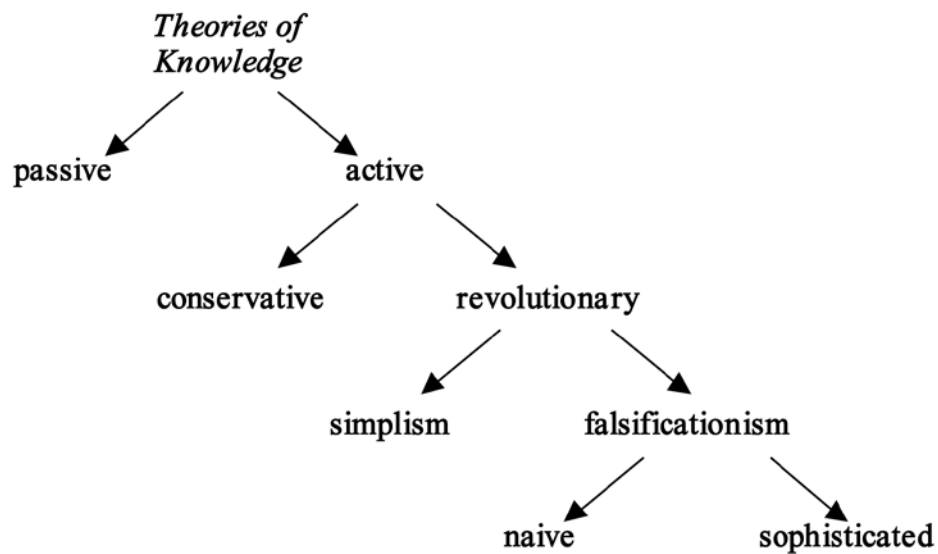


## Lakatos' Taxonomy

In recounting the debates that culminate in his own position, Lakatos,[2] drawing upon distinctions first advanced by Popper,[3] provided a taxonomy of epistemological frameworks. This scaffolding serves as a convenient platform upon which to construct an articulation of modern (post-Bacon) options with respect to theory adjudication. Lakatos presented a verbal account, which Figure 1 represents graphically as a series of distinctions.

The first branching distinguishes passivist from activist theories of knowledge. Passivists (i.e., classical empiricists) viewed knowledge as

the imprint of nature on a perfectly inert mind, the *tabula rasa*. Activists understood that empirical observation required the active application of our expectations, concepts and theories. But passivists considered mental activity only as a source of distortion.

## Conservative Activism

Lakatos distinguished conservative from revolutionary activists on the basis of their attitudes towards conceptual structures. Conservatives believed that we apply basic human expectations to create conceptual structures that make sense of the world. We thereby make the world our world. However,

once we acquire these conceptual structures, they virtually acquire us. Our theoretical commitments so constrain our expectations, conservative activists argued, that we misperceive experiences at odds with them. Revolutionary activists, however, granted us the capacity to break out of the conceptual prisons we erect. Most revolutionary activists would agree that our expectations can and often do cloud our perceptual judgments. Nevertheless, they credited us with the ability, albeit limited, to suspend or transcend our conceptual frames and to reformulate them when we deem necessary.

> We require more powerful guidance, a principle of a higher order, a maxim that can help us select among competing theories even in the presence of first-order trade-offs.

Lakatos' depiction of conservative activism amply fits verificationism. Verificationists treated theories, once verified empirically, as valid for all time and no longer subject to test. They deemed any verified theory a secure foundation for subsequent inquiry. Consequently, verificationists expected knowledge to grow in a unilinear, ever-progressing fashion, as successive generations of scholars erect new theories atop the edifice of theories their intellectual forebears had bequeathed to them.

If the spectacular supersession of Newtonian mechanics sounded verificationism's death knell, Karl Popper delivered the decisive blow to conservative activism.[4] Popper cited Hume's problem- the fallibility of inductive inference-to demonstrate this proposition:

## Proposition 1: All theories are equally unverifiable

Suppose our theory is that "all swans are white." No matter how many theory-confirming white swans we muster, we can never verify our theory. The next swan may well be non-white. No inductive inference is ever secure.

Popper disallowed recourse to probability. We cannot say that a theory is probably valid no matter how many verifying instances (and no matter how few falsifying instances) we muster. Given $n$, a finite number of confirming observations, in an infinite universe the probability that the next instance will confirm the theory is mathematically undefined, but infinitesimally close to zero: $n/¥ ≈ 0$.

We cannot say that our theory about swans being white is probably verified, regardless the number of white swans in our experience. Not only are all theories equally unverifiable, but:

## Proposition 2: All theories are equally improbable

Verificationism encounters other troubles. Consider the "paradox of the ravens". If an observation of a black raven counts as a confirming instance of the theory that "all ravens are black", then so does an observation of any non-black non-raven, such as a white tennis shoe or a yellow banana. Because the statement "all ravens are black" is logically equivalent (by the contrapositive) to the statement "all non-black things are non-ravens", any non-black non-raven counts, as much as any black raven, as a confirmation of the theory that "all ravens are black".

> Verificationists expected knowledge to grow in a unilinear, ever-progressing fashion, as successive generations of scholars erect new theories atop the edifice of theories their intellectual forebears had bequeathed to them.

Another difficulty for verificationism stems from its theory of meaning: "the meaning of a sentence is its method of verification". With this theory of meaning verificationists sought to demarcate meaningful statements- those that could be verified- from metaphysical statements, which verificationists took to be meaningless. They sought to deny cognitive significance from any proposition that fails to contribute to predicting our sensory stimulations.[5] They thereby dismissed as meaningless all metaphysical considerations. But the verificationist theory of meaning itself fails in just this way and so, on its own terms, lacks meaning.

Although verificationism predates them, the most recent advocates of verification were the logical positivists of the early 20th century. Many international studies scholars today call themselves positivists, but few, if any, are verificationists. Generally, these latter-day "positivists" are actually falsificationists (discussed below) of one variety or other. This is an unfortunate source of continuing confusion.

## Revolutionary Activism

A school of French conventionalism bridged conservative activism (verificationism) and revolutionary activism. For conventionalists, theoretical natural science provided no picture of nature, but only a logical construction. On this perspective, observations cannot falsify theories. Scientists rely on theories in order to observe or, more precisely, measure an observation scientifically.[6] So long as observation theories were no more than systems of statements adopted by convention, scientists may

freely modify them whenever recalcitrant observations threatened the theory under test. Conventionalists would effectively insulate favoured theories from empirical disconfirmation.

With this theory of meaning verificationists sought to demarcate meaningful statements- those that could be verified- from metaphysical statements, which verificationists took to be meaningless.

With falsificationism, Popper offered a remedy. Whenever scientists proposed a theory, they would state the conditions under which they would give it up. That is, if the theory were true, then it would have such-and-such empirical consequences. If these expected consequences failed to appear, *modus tollens* dictated the theory's rejection. If, however, the consequences did appear, the theory could not be accepted. To do so would be to affirm the consequent, a logical fallacy. A theory, for which the predicted empirical consequences were confirmed, could be accepted only provisionally, as some clever scientist may later refute the theory using better data, a more sophisticated test or superior acuity. Popper thereby devised a meta-theory founded on deductive inference. His falsificationism did not share the fallibility of verificationism's inductive

foundation. Just as importantly, Popper's falsificationism, contra conventionalism, explicitly banished theoretical commitment beyond the bounds of good scientific practise.

Yet Popper's logical thesis did not describe actual scientific practise. Kuhn,[7] supported by much historical evidence, characterised normal scientific practise as "puzzle-solving" activity. Scientists in normal periods investigate the ramifications of their most well-corroborated theories. When this activity produces anomalies- results consistently at odds with the paradigm theory- a crisis threatens the complacency of the puzzle-solvers. Even then, because they are committed to it, they tend to defend the paradigm theory against any rivals who propose an incommensurable formulation that putatively resolves the anomaly. The incommensurability of the new paradigm- its poor fit with the terms of the old paradigm- inhibits its adoption among adherents to the old. Scientific revolutions typically succeed less by the conversion of the current generation of scientists to the new paradigm and more by their replacement with a new generational cohort. Popper thought he had identified immutable rational standards that underpinned all scientific choice and discovery. But Kuhn's review of actual scientific practises indicated that no such standards existed.

Kuhn essentially described theory choice as an irrational process, more

akin to gang warfare than reasoned deliberation. This is unacceptable to many because it undermines the argumentative force of scientific results. If scientific choices are irrational, why should policymakers, for instance, place any weight on scientist's arguments? Lakatos endeavoured to save science from irrationalism by elaborating falsificationism in light of Kuhn's critique. He pitched his "methodology of scientific research programmes" as a more sophisticated understanding of the meta-theory Popper had proposed. In actuality, Lakatos proposed a new formulation that amounted to a major retrenchment. Lakatos abandoned theory as the main unit of epistemological significance. Theories cannot serve in that capacity, as any theorist may simply add a *ceteris paribus* condition to salvage a favoured theory by incorporating an exception to the conditions of the experiment that putatively falsified the theory.

Lakatos made the "research programme", or series of theories, as the unit of epistemological significance. Adherents to a research programme posited a "hard core" of fundamental propositions from which a "negative heuristic" diverts attention to a "protective belt" of "refutable variants". They apply *modus tollens* to these variants and never to the hard core. A "positive heuristic" provides hints and suggestions on how to develop this protective belt. Lakatos required that each step

in the belt's development be content-increasing, demonstrating a "consistently progressive theoretical problemshift", Now and then, the increase in content should be retrospectively corroborated, indicating the research programme's "intermittently progressive empirical shift".

> Kuhn essentially described theory choice as an irrational process, more akin to gang warfare than reasoned deliberation.

In enclosing falsificationism within this conceptual envelope, Lakatos deprived it of an important feature- a usable standard of theory choice. Popper had provided such a standard. He would reject a theory if it was falsified, but only provisionally, so long as refutation efforts failed. Lakatos rejected the instant rationality implicit in this "naïve" understanding of falsificationism. He recognised that budding programmes require lenient treatment, as an early refutation may prevent such a programme from discovering its most defensible formulations. Conversely, Lakatos recognised that a more mature programme might only appear to have been refuted: a cleverer inquirer with better measures, designs or tests may later vindicate the programme by refuting the refutation. So, for Lakatos,

judgments regarding the validity of research programmes can be made only in long hindsight.

Feyerabend[8] noted that postponing such judgments entirely deprived falsificationism of its claim to rationality. Because any defender of a programme subjected to refutation may simply deny the ripeness of a challenge to the progressiveness of the research programme.[9] "[I]f you are permitted to wait", Feyerabend asked, "why not wait a little longer?" For instance, consider Vasquez' depiction of (international studies) realism as a degenerating research programme. Realists can respond that however poorly realism may explain recent political history (e.g., the end of the Cold War), we should suspend judgment on its merits as a research programme pending a forthcoming retrospective corroboration. A realist proclamation of corroboration, and thus also a progressive empirical shift, would follow the next appearance of world political events consonant with a realist understanding.

Thus, the standards that Lakatos advanced ultimately failed to address the substance of Kuhn's criticism of falsificationism, which had motivated Lakatos to devise them in the first place. Lakatos, contended Feyerabend,[10] presented the apparatus of sophisticated falsificationism as merely a "verbal ornament, as a memorial to a happier time when it was still thought possible

to run a complex and often catastrophic business like science by following a few simple and 'rational' rules". The effort to identify immutable rational standards had once again failed because advocates of the dominant theory can always ask critics to wait:

## Proposition 3: All theories are equally unfalsifiable

## Relativism

Because he considered Western rationality a willing tool of Western imperialism[11] Feyerabend found cause to celebrate the "methodological anarchism" that the failure of falsificationism implied. Whether he adopted it on his own or whether his critics drove him to it, Feyerabend championed a scientific relativism that would endear him to postmodernists, many of whom also find in rationality oppression.

Ironically, the irrationality of postmodernism can nourish the oppression it rhetorically abhors. Rational argumentation, after all, serves as the sole check on brute power in setting public policies. As we abandon rational standards of theory choice, political force prevails as reason recedes. Theoretical formulations with the most powerful advocates win the tenured positions, the research funding and thereby the capacity to reproduce.

Historically, reason has undeniably been deployed in the service of oppressive, imperialistic and authoritarian ends. But one should blame those who have so deployed it and those who had allowed it to be so deployed. Blaming reason itself seems wholly misplaced. Worse, given the alternative, blaming reason seems downright dangerous.

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For postmodernists and other relativists, however, no proposition can lay claim to truth, only truth relative to someone's conceptual framework erected from her subjective experiences.

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As a second irony, their relativism classes postmodernists, with verificationists, as conservative activists. Verificationists thought all verified knowledge secure. Once verified or proven true by observation, we need never revisit any formulation. Verificationists thought their knowledge, because verified, always consisted of true propositions. For postmodernists and other relativists, however, no proposition can lay claim to truth, only truth relative to someone's conceptual framework erected from her subjective experiences. Neither, then, is open to criticism: verificationists because they believe themselves already in possession of the truth and relativists because they have no notion of truth.

Putnam argued that Feyerabend's relativism, like all relativism concerning truth, is self-refuting. If one claims that truth is relative, Putnam argued, he would counter that "truth may be relative for you, but it isn't relative for me". This does demonstrate the subjectivist folly of claiming truth to be relative. Once two conversants have such an exchange, nothing can follow. But I think the point can be made more directly, if less subtly. The moment that one asserts that "truth is relative", one makes a truth claim. But, if truth were relative, why would one bother to make such a truth claim? The very act of issuing a truth claim effectively refutes the notion that truth is relative. For truth-relativists, intellectual discourse becomes pointless.

Truth-relativism sometimes attracts adherents among those who would welcome a more transcultural international studies. At first blush, relativism seems an appropriate way to express the notion that thinkers with differing cultural backgrounds may and often do come to differing conclusions, even from the same body of evidence. But we do not need to follow truth-relativists into cloud-cuckoo-land in order to make this point. We can acknowledge there is a singular truth to any matter, but at the same time allow that there may be a plurality of conceptions used to describe it. That is, we can accept conceptual relativism as we reject truth-relativism. Across

cultures and even across individuals within cultures, experiences vary. As a consequence, concepts and their contents also vary. In conversation, we mutually adjust our conceptual structures. We each make the contributions of the other comprehensible within conceptual framework we have acquired through our (differing, yet overlapping) life experiences.

> Each interpretation is embedded within a cultural milieu composed of features that themselves arise from an earlier milieu and that represent the latest way-station along a culture's historical trajectory.

However irresponsible, irrational and self-refuting it may be, Feyerabend's truth-relativism flowed from falsificationism's inability to articulate rational standards of theory choice. Compared to sophisticated falsificationists, who maintained foundational standards they all but acknowledged to be non-existent, Feyerabend was at least consistent. But a return to conservative activism- this time in a relativist guise- need not have been the response to falsificationism's failure. One might instead have stayed within revolutionary activism, where an alternative was already available.

## Simplism/Pragmatism

To the side of this debate over falsification resides another school of revolutionary activism. Lakatos lumped two approaches together, naming them "Duhem-Quine simplism". Both Duhem and Quine are considered "holists". In his 19th century formulation, Duhem held that, in any experiment, the individual research hypothesis is never singly under test. Also tested are all the ancillary propositions that comprise the experimental setting- the observation theories on which it relies, its background assumptions, the measures it employs, etc. In Quine's 20th century formulation, however, hypothesis tests always concern the entirety of human knowledge. Each time we test a hypothesis, for Quine, all our knowledge is at stake. Fitting any new experience into our knowledge requires some adjustment to the web of our beliefs. Ordinarily we need to affect at most only small adjustments at the web's periphery. Sometimes, but only rarely, the integration of a new set of experiences requires adjustments closer to the web's core, necessitating additional adjustments and reformulations elsewhere in the web. These would be akin to what Kuhn termed "scientific revolutions", in which a new paradigm displaces the old. In any event, for Quine, we make these adjustments in order to maximise continually the coherence, or goodness-of-fit, of the whole of our

knowledge. Quine's views on such matters, since extended by Putnam,[12] are today more widely known as "pragmatic realism" or simply "pragmatism".

> For the rationalisation of international studies as a discipline, a top to bottom overhaul aimed at producing rational knowledge about how the world works, considering the perspectives and traditions of all- the colonised as well as the coloniser.

We are left at this juncture with three approaches: relativism, sophisticated methodological falsificationism and pragmatism. I have already dismissed relativism as irrational and self-refuting, so the choice is between falsificationism and pragmatism. Although I refuse to follow him into irrationalism, I find Feyerabend's critique of Lakatos decisive. I also find a rational criterion for theory choice in the pragmatic recommendation that we maximise the global coherence of our knowledge. Fortunately, we do not need here to decide between falsificationism and pragmatism. For the purposes of this essay, we need only note that the two contemporary and rational approaches to theory choice- falsificationism and pragmatism- make theory choice a matter not of individual contemplation, but of collective deliberation.

## Practical Considerations for International Studies

The collective and deliberative nature of contemporary theory choice presents difficulties for social science generally, and most particularly for those social sciences, like international studies, that transcend cultural bounds. The difficulty arises in the social sciences because they differ fundamentally from the natural sciences. I find it useful to convey this difference by referring to Aristotle's *aitia*, or (loosely speaking) the causes, reasons or explanations of objects, events or processes. Aristotle's main presentation of *aitia* appears in his *Physics.*[13]

Aristotle understood any empirical entity, depicted as X in Figure 2, to be the joint product of four distinct *aitia*:

- *Efficient cause* refers to the Humean concept of cause. Efficient cause is "the primary source of the change", or "what makes of what is made and what changes of what is changed". If X were a sculpture, for instance, the efficient cause would be the sculptor's chiseling.

- *Material cause* we might consider the effects of composition on the (efficient) causal power of X. Material cause refers to "that out of which a thing comes to be and which

persists…, e.g., the bronze of the statue, the silver of the bowl . . . ." For a sculpture, then, the material cause would be its medium, e.g., the marble or granite.

- *Formal cause* refers to the shape, form, or concept of X. It is, for Aristotle, "the form or the archetype, i.e. the definition of the essence and… the parts [*genus* and *differentia*] in the definition". The formal cause of a sculpture, then, is the idea of the sculpture in the mind of the sculptor.

- *Final cause* refers to the contribution of the ends of purposeful agents in producing X, or, for Aristotle, "that for the sake of which a thing is done". The final cause of a sculpture would be the intended effect of the sculpture on its beholders.

I have added a diagonal in Figure 2 to demarcate the natural sciences and the social sciences. Natural scientists concern themselves with efficient and material causes of objects (and events and processes) found in nature. They do not treat formal and final causes. Social scientists, on the other hand, concern themselves with all four causes of the artifacts they study. In a sense, natural scientists have it easy. They need only investigate efficient and material causes. Final causes do not concern them because the entities they study are not teleological: they do not act in ways designed purposefully to produce desired

outcomes. Neither do formal causes concern them. Communities of natural scientific inquirers can impose meanings by convention. They need not worry about meanings from the perspectives of the objects of their investigations, because these objects are oblivious to those meanings.

> Knowledge is our sole bulwark against the unreasonable demands of tyrants. For knowledge to have persuasive force, it must be rational.

Social scientists very much concern themselves with intentions and meanings, with final and formal cause. But intentions and meanings receive interpretation only from within a cultural context. Each interpretation is embedded within a cultural milieu composed of features that themselves arise from an earlier milieu and that represent the latest way-station along a culture's historical trajectory. Consequently, the venues within which the truth claims of transcultural social sciences, e.g., international studies, are tested and redeemed must encourage the full participation of scholars across those cultures. More than this, we must produce diversity at all stages of knowledge production in our recruitment of students, in our support

for research projects, in our development of data and texts, and in every aspect of our discipline. To do otherwise would be to short change the enterprise.

I am arguing, then, for the rationalisation of international studies as a discipline, a top to bottom overhaul aimed at producing rational knowledge about how the world works, considering the perspectives and traditions of all- the colonised as well as the coloniser. Only in this way can we build a discipline that can help us all live better, more fulfilling and more peaceable lives. The alternative is more regime apology.

**Figure 2: Aristotelian *Aitia***
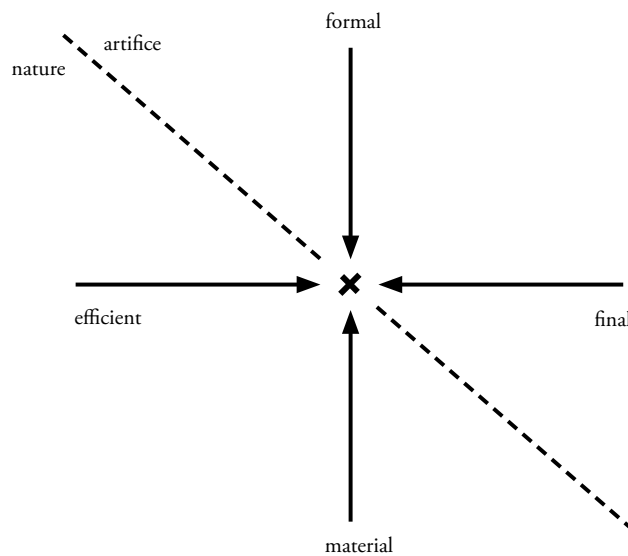
## Conclusion

Knowledge is our sole bulwark against the unreasonable demands of tyrants. For knowledge to have persuasive force, it must be rational. There exists no mechanical or formulaic rational standard for choosing between theories. Whether we adopt the falsificationist or the pragmatic standard, we necessarily submit claims of scientific truth to the community of experts for discursive redemption (or rejection). In the social sciences, because meanings vary cross-culturally and because intentions are

subject to interpretation, discursive redemption can be rational only to the extent that the community of experts remains open to the variety of cultural perspectives that comprise the global community.

This applies particularly to international studies. This discipline's subject matter transcends cultures. Scholars often investigate activities in which disparate cultural traditions interact with one another. Others find themselves in position to advise political practitioners on issues of foreign policy. Under these conditions, we cannot afford to allow representatives of a relatively small subset of the world's cultures to control judgments regarding the validity of social theories of world politics.

Imagine the echo chamber that such a state of affairs might produce. A history of capital exploitation and colonial domination produces a dominant international relations theory. Its advocates control the offices and resources of the discipline. Their views predominate amid the councils of state leaders. They insist that their theoretical formulations, to the exclusion of all others, capture the real nature of world politics. They marginalise advocates of alternative formulations by characterising them "idealist" dreamers who do not share the dominant group's "realism". State leaders produce foreign policies and take actions that presuppose the truth of the dominant group's formulations.

They thereby create conditions that render those formulations self-fulfilling prophesies.

We could construct an international studies that is oriented toward achieving consensual analyses of human communities and their problems and formulating consensual collective actions for overcoming them.

This nightmare scenario does not deviate much from the state of the discipline until relatively recently. Since the end of the Cold War, the discipline has moved discernibly in the right direction. With the improvements in telecommunication and transportation technologies that have accompanied globalisation, international studies has recently become much more international and transcultural. And a sizeable segment of the discipline does not engage in political rationalisation and regime apology. We do far better than we did only 40-45 years ago, when faculty from my own graduate department were devising techniques in support of efforts to prop up a cadre of thugs that dominated a small country in Southeast Asia.[14] But still, much room for improvement remains.

We could construct an international studies that is oriented toward

achieving consensual analyses of human communities and their problems and formulating consensual collective actions for overcoming them. Our research products should increasingly include voices from the ranks of the colonised, even if we diminish (but surely not eliminate) voices of the colonisers. More generally, our deliberative associations and journals should find ways to open themselves to perspectives that have heretofore been closed out. Instead of dismissing new and alien ideas out-of-hand, scholars should go out of their way to engage them. Reward structures could be established to incent transcultural engagement. In the final analysis, a discipline that self-consciously promotes transcultural engagement would promote inter-cultural *modus vivendi* and dampen frustrations that culminate too often in political violence.

# Endnotes

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2   Imre Lakatos, "Falsificationism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes", in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, pp. 91-196.

3   Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York, Harper and Row, 1959. For Popper's response to Kuhn, see Karl Popper, "Normal Science and Its Dangers", in Lakatos and Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, pp. 51-58.

4   Ibid.

5   Putnam, "Beyond the Fact/Value Dichotomy", pp. 139-140.

6   Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, pp. 78-81.

7   Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1970.

8   Paul Feyerabend, "Consolations for the Specialist", in Lakatos and Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, pp. 197-230.

9   John Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (December 1997), pp. 899-912.

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13  Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Revised Oxford Translation, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 332-333, lines 194b16-195b30. See also, J. M. E. Moravscik, "How Do Words Get Their Meanings", *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 78 (1981), pp. 5-24.

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